



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS DAY IS JANUARY 11**

*WEAR BLUE TO INCREASE AWARENESS AS TENNESSEE MAINTAINS MOMENTUM IN FIGHT AGAINST  
HUMAN TRAFFICKING*

**NASHVILLE** – National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is January 11, and all are encouraged to wear navy blue in support of efforts to fight trafficking in Tennessee.

Human trafficking – the illegal trading of human beings for commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor – is a multifaceted issue facing the state. Anyone can be a trafficking victim, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, residence or economic status.

“Tennessee is committed to doing our part in addressing human trafficking,” said Dr. Raquel Hatter, DHS Commissioner and chair of the Human Trafficking Task Force. “We know that this issue is important to Tennesseans. Please join us in bringing awareness to this very important issue.”

Tennessee continues to take great strides towards eradicating human trafficking and recently received national recognition for earning the highest score in the nation. The score was generated by Shared Hope International’s 2013 Protected Innocence Challenge state report card, which studies existing state laws that address crimes of domestic trafficking of minors.

Human trafficking takes many forms and knows no boundaries, making it a highly complex and under-reported issue. Education and awareness are key to ending this epidemic. There are several resources available to help learn more about who could be victim, and what people can do to help. These resources are available online and through many national, state and local entities, such as The Polaris Project and Shared Hope International.

To add your voice and strength in raising awareness, everyone is encouraged to help shed light on the issue by spreading the word about the effects of human trafficking. Please tell a friend, a neighbor, or a family member about this crime.

“Every individual has a role in helping to eradicate human trafficking,” Hatter said. “It is our hope that by bringing awareness to human trafficking and its effects, we can help empower those impacted to move from a state of victimization to one of survivorship.”

If you suspect an individual may be a victim of human trafficking, contact the Tennessee Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-855-55-TNHTH (1-855-55-86484).

Today the Department of Human Services (DHS) encouraged staff and partners to wear navy blue, the color designated for human trafficking awareness in recognition of National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam joined in acknowledging this very important issue. A photo is available upon request.

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